So, you want to be a mental health professional?

Jim Graham
Mental health professionals provide services intended to treat mental illness or improve the mental health of individuals.

- Individual treatment of adults and children
- Group treatments
- Treatment of family and couples
- Assessment and diagnosis
Mental health services fall within the scope of practice of several licensures.

Licensure types and requirements vary by state.
- Check the laws for the state you’d like to practice
- Washington Department of Health
  - Licensing/Certification
- Psychologist
- Mental Health Counselor
- Marriage and Family Therapist
- (Licensed Clinical Social Worker)
- (Psychiatrist)
- Psychologist
- Mental Health Counselor
- Marriage and Family Therapist
- (Licensed Clinical Social Worker)
- (Psychiatrist)
Psychiatry

- Psychiatrists are medical doctors, and are first trained as physicians
  - Complete medical school
  - Complete a rotating internship
  - Complete a residency in psychiatry

- Psychiatrists have prescription privileges
Psychologist
Mental Health Counselor
Marriage and Family Therapist
(Licensed Clinical Social Worker)
(Psychiatrist)
Licensed Clinical Social Work

- This is not a specialty I know much about
- Most states require a Masters degree in Social Work.
- While many Licensed Clinical Social Workers engage in individual treatment, they also enact change through public policy and interacting with clients’ environments.
- Psychologist
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Psychologist
Mental Health Counselor
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(Psychiatrist)
Psychologist

- **Education**: Doctorate (Ph.D., Psy.D., or Ed.D.) in Clinical Psychology, Counseling Psychology, or School Psychology
- Licensed at the Doctoral level
- Programs are accredited by the American Psychological Association

- **Experience**: 
  - 1 year pre-doctoral internship
  - 1 year (1500 hours) post-doctorate supervised experience
Psychologists

Scope of practice includes:

- Provide mental health services to children, individuals, couples, families, and groups.

- Administering and interpreting psychological tests (personality, IQ, achievement, etc.)

- In some states, limited prescription privileges are available with additional training
Mental Health Counselors

- **Education:** Masters or doctorate in Counseling, Counselor Education or related field.
- Licensed at the Masters level

- Programs are accredited by the **Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)**

- **Experience:**
  - 3 years (3000 hours) of supervised experience
  - Credit for 550 hours given if from a CACREP program
Mental Health Counselors

- **Scope of practice includes:**
  - Provide mental health services to children, individuals, couples, families, and groups.
  - While some testing is within the scope of counseling, formal psychological assessment is generally not
Marriage and Family Therapists

**Education**: Masters or doctorate in Marriage and Family Therapy

**Licensed at the Masters level**

**Programs are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE)**

**Experience:**
- 2 years/3000 hours of supervised experience
- Credit for 600 hours if from a COAMFTE program
Marriage and Family Therapists

- **Scope of practice includes:**
  - Provide mental health services to children, individuals, couples, families, and groups.
  - While some testing is within the scope of MFT, formal psychological assessment is generally not.
  - Despite the name, MFTs are not restricted by treatment modality: diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders, whether affective, behavioral, or cognitive, **within the context of family systems.**
Psychologist
- 5 to 6 + years of grad school
- 1 year post-degree

MHC
- 2 years of grad school
- 2 years post-degree

MFT
- 2 years of grad school
- 2 years post-degree

Many folks think that becoming a psychologist is the only way to be a mental health professional.

If what you’re interested in doing is therapy, becoming a psychologist is one of the least efficient ways to do it.
Good reasons to go for your doctorate:

- You want to be trained extensively in research
- You want to become a faculty member at a university
- In psychology: you want to make formal psychological assessment part of your career

Bad reasons to go for a doctorate:

- Ego
Types of Degrees for Psychologists

- Clinical vs. Counseling Psychology
- Ph.D. vs. Psy.D.
Clinical Psychology
- Traditionally:
  - Based on the medical model
  - Treats the seriously mentally ill
- Often
  - Accept a higher % of folks with Bachelor degrees
  - Housed in Psychology Departments

Counseling Psychology
- Traditionally:
  - Based on the developmental model
  - Treats phase-of-life and adjustment disorders
- Often
  - Accepts a higher % of folks with Masters degrees
  - Housed in Education Departments

Anymore, Clinical and Counseling programs are relatively indistinguishable
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ph.D.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Psy.D.</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boulder Model, Scientist-Practitioner</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vail Model, Practitioner-Scholar</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Train students to be practitioners and <em>creators</em> of research</td>
<td>- Train students to be practitioners and <em>consumers</em> of research</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Often</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Clinical or Counseling</td>
<td>- Clinical Only</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Have small cohort sizes (2 to 12 students)</td>
<td>- Have medium to large cohort sizes (8 to 60+)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Housed in public and private schools</td>
<td>- Housed in private and free-standing professional schools</td>
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Still want to be a mental health professional?

- Consider the cost

- Consider the benefits

- Remember, priorities change, and the reality of something doesn’t always match our expectations
Further Information

- Psychology

- Mental Health Counseling
  - ACA: [http://www.counseling.org/](http://www.counseling.org/)
  - Accredited programs: [http://www.cacrep.org/directory/](http://www.cacrep.org/directory/)

- Marriage and Family Therapy
  - AAMFT: [http://www.aamft.org/](http://www.aamft.org/)
  - Accredited programs: [https://www.aamft.org/imis15/AAMFT/Content/Directories/MFT_Training_Programs.aspx](https://www.aamft.org/imis15/AAMFT/Content/Directories/MFT_Training_Programs.aspx)
“Eye on Psy Chi” has some great articles on issues pertaining to graduate school: http://www.psichi.org/?page=eye_main#.Vk0henarRaQ

For those interested in doctoral programs in Clinical or Counseling Psychology, the best resource is: http://www.amazon.com/Insiders-Graduate-Programs-Counseling-Psychology/dp/1462518133